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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA ALLISON MONZ, EUR/ERA JEFF GIAUQUE  
AND EUR/CE JAMIE LAMORE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/08/2019

TAGS: PREL EU SY HU

SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN COMMENTS ON THE EU-SYRIA ASSOCIATION  
AGREEMENT

REF: SECSTATE 1985

Classified By: P/E Counselor Eric Gaudiosi, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) PolOff met with MFA EU External Relations Section Head Andras Dekany on January 9 to discuss reftel. Dekany first stated that there was no information from their EU representative in Brussels that the EU-Syrian Association Agreement would be on the January 26-27 GAERC agenda. He commented that the EU report of Sarkozy's January 6 visit to Syria had no reference to discussions of the Association Agreement. That said, he noted that the Czechs surely would defer to the French if they pushed to have the subject included in the discussions. While Dekany said that Hungary supports the EU-U.S. strategic goal to separate Syria from Iran, he personally commented that it "would be useful to provide incentives to Syria, channeling EU funds to them if conditions, and timing, are appropriate." As a side note, Dekany mentioned that the MFA's EU Department Chief, Zsolt Pataki, covered the Syrian/Lebanon issue as part of a broader middle-east discussion with Israel's Ambassador to Hungary in December.

¶2. (C) Comment. While Dekany offered to provide a more detailed Hungarian position on the issue, if one develops prior to the January GAERC, Post anticipates that Hungary will, as Dekany noted, "listen to the big guys" and follow the EU consensus on the issue. End comment.

Foley